

SECRET

Historical Data

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*efate*

1944

The United States Naval Hospital #2 which was located at Vila, on the island of Espiritu Santo, served its intended purpose during the years 1942 and 1943 when the war in the South Pacific was not too far distant. However, as the combat zones moved North and other hospitals were constructed nearer to the battle fronts the usefulness of the Hospital #2 diminished. During the year 1944 no battle casualties were received and only local patients were admitted coming from the various activities stationed on the island and from ships which called at this port. The census of patients slowly decreased throughout the year as the military activities were ordered to other areas. The situation finally arrived where it became necessary to dismantle the hospital in order to be able to move the other activities from the island which the hospital was dependant on.

The dismantling process actually began in February 1944 when two units, of 400 beds each, were received and substituted for shipment as additions to hospital #1 located for advanced bases. These units were never used as planned and are still with the hospital.

In June 1944 orders were received to reduce the bed capacity from five hundred to two hundred beds on 1 July 1944, and to cease to function as a hospital on 1 August 1944. The process of dismantling was gradually going on in small forms of decisions during these months. On 1 November 1944 all buildings, equipment and supplies were crated and loaded aboard ship. The entire hospital with its personnel of four officers and 19 men, embarked for Noumea, New Caledonia to the selected station arriving on 2 November 1944.

The unloading of the ship required ten days and this work was done by the Army. The ship was assigned to the 6th Marine Dump Area which the Marines were using as a staging area. This staging site has turned out to be ideal for this purpose. There are 17 storehouse buildings in this area, 40 by 100 feet, and it was necessary to use 10 of these buildings to re-stock the supplies and equipment. The buildings and much of the heavy machinery were stored in the 47th See Bee Area where it is ideal for repairs and re-crating by that activity. All medical supplies and equipment have been sorted and segregated by the hospital's personnel with the aid of borrowed modern machinery from the Army. The work is now almost completed.

Early in the year of 1944 it was evident that the hospital had served its purpose. Its location and no changes or improvements seemed warranted. There were no administrative or personnel problems that occurred during the year other than those that usually are present in all hospitals.

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Base Hospital No. 2

1944

Historical Data(Contd.)

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The personnel of the malaria control groups of both the Army and Navy deserve much credit for the work performed in the immediate vicinity of the living and working areas of all activities stationed on the island. Prior to the occupation of Efate by the Armed Forces, this island was a hot bed for malaria but following the efforts of Malaria Control it became a reasonably safe place to live.

During the year 1943 there were 531 original admissions of malaria to the hospital and in the year 1944 to August 1st. there were 68 cases treated with original infection.

There were 19 original admissions for malaria during the year of 1943 from members of the staff and only 3 for the year 1944 up to August when the hospital closed. The reservation was free of anopheles mosquitoes and very few culex were found in the searches. All cases of malaria developing in the members of the staff were generally considered to have been contracted while off the reservation on recreation..

All personnel having been on the island of Efate, and particularly at the hospital, will in general retain pleasant recollections of their tour of duty.

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